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**REMARKS BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA AT THE  
TEMPEST EXPRESS 22 OR SHETUBANDHAN  
DISASTER RESPONSE PLANNING WORKSHOP**

**CLOSING CEREMONY  
MAY 14, 2013**

Minister of Disaster Management and Relief, Hon. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP  
AFD Principal Staff Officer, Lt Gen Abu Belal Mohammad Shaiful Haque, ndc, psc

All who, like me, believe in preparedness, preparedness for disaster

Asalaam 'malaikum and good afternoon

Shetubandhan ...

Shetubandhan ...

“Bridging the Ties of Friendship” ...

There could be no better name for this workshop.

That is what this workshop is all about ... bridging the ties of friendship for a purpose, an extremely important purpose ... to prepare, to prepare for disaster.

No nation is immune to disaster. Within recent weeks, America experienced the bomb attack at the Boston Marathon and the horrible industrial accident at a fertilizer plant in Texas.

Disaster ... disaster ... America certainly knows disaster. Each country in this room knows disaster. Bangladesh, too, knows disaster. The nation still reels from the April 24 disaster in nearby Savar, where the Rana Plaza building collapsed, killing over 1200 people ... we still grieve for the victims and their families. And as we gather here, a cyclone is churning its way up the Bay of Bengal with unknown consequences for Bangladesh, Myanmar and India.

Each country represented here this afternoon has tasted disaster, and it is a most bitter taste. Especially threatening is earthquake, which strikes with greatest fury and often with little, if any, warning.

As I said a week ago during my remarks to open this workshop, we cannot wish away an earthquake; we cannot prevent them from occurring; we cannot make them go someplace else, but we can prepare for them; we can develop the policies, guidelines, standard operating procedures, plans needed to ensure the most effective response possible.

... and that is exactly what you have been doing this past week. I know ... I sneaked in to see for myself how hard you were working ... I saw the beaded sweat on your foreheads, your minds at work to explore new avenues of preparedness, to exchange ideas on how best to respond, to dig, dig, dig deeply so that each of you ... and the country that each of you represents ... would leave this workshop carrying a rich legacy that you can take home, whether here in Bangladesh or elsewhere, a legacy that you can tap as you resume your duties and responsibilities to help your respective countries prepare, prepare for disaster.

Of course, there are so many take-aways from a workshop like this. I think one key lesson is that preparing for and responding to an earthquake, or any major disaster for that matter, is a whole of government, whole of society engagement ... no single entity can do it all. Numerous government ministries and agencies, the military, civil society, the media, volunteers, the general populace are all essential to preparing for and responding to an earthquake. The challenge is how to coordinate all these players into a cohesive team ... imagine a cricket or football team on the field with each player doing his own thing with no regard for his teammates ... that would be a disaster in its own right. Equally calamitous would be a response to disaster where no one communicates with, coordinates with, works with other players in preparing for, responding to disasters.

As your exercises over the past days have made clear, coordinating all these players is not easy, but it is critically important, it is essential, it is mandatory.

I believe realistic training exercises like this, involving all the players, are the key to developing the understanding, the confidence, the trust that is needed so all the players ... government, military, civil society, media, general populace ... can engage cohesively and effectively in preparing for and responding to disasters. As you undertake such future exercises, I hope you ensure that they are realistic. When an earthquake hits, many key participants in responding may be dead, injured or otherwise unavailable; communications may be damaged or destroyed; vehicles and other tools for responding may be inoperable; roads may be impassable; you yourself may be incapacitated ... be sure to keep your training exercises real.

I could go on and on about the results of this conference and the many lessons and insights that you are carrying home with you, but you already are well aware of the rich benefits of this workshop.

So let me wish you each well as you prepare to return to your work, as you prepare for the most critical part of this workshop ... applying the lessons learned here over the past week ... that is key ... applying the ideas developed here is what will make your respective countries safer, more prepared for disaster, more ready to respond effectively ... that is how you save lives.

I wish you well as you head home, whether Bangladesh or beyond; I wish you well as you endeavor to prepare for disaster.

I wish, too, to thank the government of Bangladesh and especially the Armed Forces Division for hosting this exercise. I am pleased that America could partner with you to make this workshop possible. Your warm Bangladeshi hospitality, your professionalism, the wondrous cultural program, your always going the extra mile truly made Tempest Express 22 ... Shetubandhan ... most successful ... thank you.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*